8. (New) A device for detecting a manner in which a vehicle seat is occupied, comprising:

a stereoscopic image recording device including at least one optical sensor recording a scene at the vehicle seat, the image recording device deriving, from the scene, a three-dimensional map partitioned into a plurality of zones, indicating for each of the zones a distance from a reference point, the at least one optical sensor having a nonlinear transducer characteristic curve, describing a correlation between an incident light intensity and an electrical output signal of the at least one optical sensor, a steepness of the characteristic curve decreasing with increasing light intensity.

9. (New) The device according to claim 8, wherein the characteristic curve has a logarithmic shape.

10. (New) The device according to claim 8, wherein the at least one optical sensor includes two optical sensors situated at a predefined distance from each other, the at least two optical sensors simultaneously recording the scene at the vehicle seat.

11. (New) The device according to claim 8, further comprising a stereo-optical instrument taking two images of the vehicle seat, offset by a defined distance from each other, on a single optical sensor.

12. (New) The device according to claim 8, further comprising a light source for illuminating the scene at the vehicle seat, the light source shining light synchronously with an activation of the image recording device.

13. (New) The device according to claim 12, wherein the light source shines light in the infrared range.

14. (New) The device according to claim 8, further comprising an infrared band-pass filter situated in front of the at least one optical sensor.